United Nations A/S-20/PV.1

General Assembly
Twentieth Special Session

Official Records

1st plenary meeting
Monday, 8 June 1998, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko . . . . . Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the session by the Chairman of the delegation of Ukraine

The Temporary President: I declare open the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The Temporary President: I now invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (Article 19 of the Charter) (A/S-20/8)

The Temporary President: I should like, in keeping with the established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/S-20/8, which contains a letter addressed to the President of the General Assembly by the Secretary-General, in which he informs the Assembly that 23 Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I would like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years."

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Credentials of representatives to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly

(a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee

The Temporary President: Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly, at the beginning of each session, shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members.

In accordance with precedents, and as recommended by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs acting as preparatory body for the twentieth special session of the

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General Assembly, the Credentials Committee of the twentieth special session should have the same membership as that of the fifty-second regular session of the Assembly — namely, Argentina, Barbados, Bhutan, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Norway, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and Zambia.

If there is no objection, I shall consider the Credentials Committee constituted accordingly.

It was so decided.

The Temporary President: In this connection, may I invite the attention of the members of the Assembly to a note verbale from the Secretary-General, dated 25 March 1998, in which it was stated that credentials should be issued for all representatives to the special session, in accordance with rule 27 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. I would urge all members to submit the credentials of representatives to the Secretary-General as soon as possible.

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Election of the President

The Temporary President: The preparatory body recommends that the twentieth special session take place under the presidency of the President of the fifty-second regular session, Mr. Hennadiy Udovenko of Ukraine.

I take it that the Assembly wishes to elect him President of the General Assembly at its twentieth special session by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Temporary President: I extend my sincere congratulations to Mr. Hennadiy Udovenko and invite him to assume the presidency.

I request the Chief of Protocol to escort the President to the podium.

Mr. Udovenko took the Chair.

Statement by Mr. Hennadiy Udovenko, President of the General Assembly at its twentieth special session

The President: It is a great honour and privilege for me to be elected President of the General Assembly at its twentieth special session devoted to countering the world drug problem together. I am very grateful to all Member States for their support of my candidature and I look forward to working together with them on accomplishing the main task of this session: the development of a forward-looking strategy for the twenty-first century. For me personally, the opportunity to preside over this forum is especially significant, since I have vivid memories of the previous special session on this problem. As the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations at that time, I was proud that my country came up then with the initiative to proclaim the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse.

Looking back at that special session eight years ago, we can see that the alarm sounded then proved to be remarkably prophetic, as the drug problem has steadily become a major concern of an ever-growing number of countries. The illegal drug trade has reached staggering proportions and, together with organized crime, now poses a deadly threat to the world in the next century. With an estimated worth of more than $400 billion a year, the trade in narcotics is one of the most profitable underground businesses, larger than the oil and gas trade and the chemicals and pharmaceuticals business, and twice as big as the motor vehicle industry. The amount of money involved in drug-trafficking is assuming such proportions that it is now capable of tainting or destabilizing global financial markets. Even more dangerous, drugs are tearing apart societies, spawning crime, spreading diseases such as AIDS, and killing youth, the most vulnerable part and the future of our societies. The drug problem, in other words, has become a global phenomenon and no nation can feel secure from this menace.

On the other hand, recent years have been marked with other trends which have given the international community an unprecedented opportunity to make real progress towards achieving the ultimate goal of a drug-free world. At the turn of the millennium, the ideological divides have diminished to provide a more cooperative climate for dealing with global issues, including the blurring of previous policy differences between producing and consuming nations. At the same time, years of drug-control activities have identified the know-how and technologies that promise success. Both of those tendencies have brought a strong commitment on the part of the United Nations membership to combat illicit drug-trafficking in a balanced way, striving to reduce supply and demand simultaneously.

These encouraging signs, however, should in no way lead to complacency or reduced vigilance. An issue of enormous complexity, the drug problem cannot be wished away by good intentions, and the international community must be prepared for a long and gruelling fight. To be successful, it would need clarity of vision to formulate overarching policies and strategies, as much as it would have to be result-oriented, pragmatic and innovative in its day-to-day drug control activities.

In this regard, I am particularly pleased with the results of the preparatory process leading up to this special session. True to the current reformist spirit at the Organization, Member States broke with some of the past traditions of handling global problems at such forums. They opted for a more condensed format with a clear intention not only to give a global overview of all aspects of drug problems, assess the worldwide drug situation or review the existing control regime, but also to forge an effective drug control strategy and clearly define target dates for achieving its goals.

I would especially like to commend the Chairman of the preparatory body, Mr. Alvaro de Mendonça e Moura of Portugal, for his vigour, enthusiasm, foresight and flexibility in performing his duties and steering the preparatory process towards its successful outcome.

Three main draft documents which have evolved as a result of several rounds of negotiations provide a solid framework for improving the international community's performance in key areas of international drug control: the draft Political Declaration, the draft Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction and the draft Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development. Demonstrating political commitment to fighting all aspects of the drug problem at both the national and international levels, their provisions represent a clear reference for a new global strategy which received full endorsement during the preparatory process.

A crucial aspect of this new strategy lies in refocusing the efforts of the international community on people rather than just on the drugs themselves, which requires a shift from the "firefighter" approach to a more genuinely global and long-term view. Therefore, it is quite natural that the goal of reducing drug demand was defined as a key element of that strategy, together with eradication of illicit drug crops and promotion of alternative development.

This special session has tremendous potential for becoming another milestone in tackling the drug problem. It has before it a set of substantive, far-reaching and action-oriented documents. But we will certainly have failed in the eyes of the world if we do not work as hard on implementing these declarations and intentions as we did on drafting them. Even the most clearly defined tasks with a strict time line of target dates will remain unfulfilled if they are not followed up by concrete actions. To bring them about we need to create a new international partnership based on the principle of shared responsibility. We must also strengthen the international drug control machinery and find innovative ways to fulfil, both at the national and international levels, the ambitious new commitments we are about to take upon ourselves.

In this context it is hard to overestimate the importance of the already existing international tools: the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the International Narcotics Control Board, the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the system of international legal instruments. The role of UNDCP, which has already made great strides under the leadership of its Executive Director, Mr. Pino Arlacchi, should be further enhanced, turning it into a recognized centre of competence and an international point of reference on drug control.

Strengthening the legal framework to improve the application of drug control laws is essential for success in the global fight against illicit drugs. Without effective intergovernmental cooperation in such areas as extradition, mutual legal assistance and transfer of proceedings, virtually none of the international treaty provisions against drug-trafficking can be implemented. Promoting government adherence to and implementation of international legal instruments in this sphere, together with the adoption of enabling legislation, should be another important objective of follow-up activities.

One should not overlook the vital role of civil society when speaking about international efforts to combat drug abuse. Forging a new partnership with non-governmental organizations, the private sector, labour unions, local communities and individual families is a prerequisite of long-term success.

Our session is taking place against the background of ongoing reforms of the world body as it prepares itself to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. This special session of the General Assembly is thus providing

the international community with a unique chance to demonstrate once again that the United Nations is a dynamic and vibrant body capable of dealing with tasks of major global concern. It can show the world that despite the forbidding complexity of the issues involved and the often divergent national interests of its Member States, the United Nations can be truly united in the face of a common threat and can work with determination, creativity and effectiveness for the common good. I have no doubt that the results of this session will bear out this optimism, and I wish the Assembly great success in this endeavour.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan.

Statement by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General: A very warm welcome to you all. I am delighted to see so many heads of State and Government, Ministers and senior officials in this great Hall today.

You have come to New York because you know that we have reached a crossroads in the challenge to reduce production and trafficking of illegal drugs. The proliferation of drugs over the past 30 years is an example of the previously unimaginable becoming reality very quickly — a tragic reality. It is my hope that when historians study the work of humankind in the field of drug control they will write about the next few days as the point where this trend was reversed. It is my hope that they will record this as the time when the international community found common ground in the mission to create momentum towards a drug-free world in the twenty-first century.

The proposed Political Declaration before the Assembly is the product of months of hard work and effort. It is rare — indeed, almost unprecedented in United Nations history — for consensus to be reached on the substantive as well as the political issues months in advance of a special session.

The ground-breaking Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction creates a balanced approach which for the first time addresses the responsibility of nations where consumption is a problem as well as that of nations where production is a problem.

The preparatory body in Vienna has also put forward action plans on a series of important subjects: stemming the flow of stimulants and their precursors, judicial cooperation, combating money-laundering and collaborating on eradication and alternative development.

In each case, a target date must be met. By the year 2008, Member States should have made real progress in eliminating or reducing significantly crops of opium poppy, coca and cannabis. The growing trend in abuse and production of psychotropic substances must also be reversed.

Special attention should be devoted to the high-rising tide of illegal synthetic drugs and their precursors.

These are not easy challenges to meet. There will always be those who are ready to throw in the towel. But we must never give in to the human toll illegal drugs are taking on our societies. There are 21 million victims around the world who abuse cocaine and heroin, and 30 million who abuse amphetamine-type stimulants. We cannot ease their suffering, nor that of their loved ones, unless we fight this evil.

Last year, I designated Vienna as the centre of the United Nations fight against "uncivil society" — that is, those who use the benefits of globalization to traffic in illegal drugs, launder money, engage in terrorism and traffic in human beings.

Under the leadership of Pino Arlacchi, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme has risen to the challenge. It has shaped a balanced and global strategy to implement the decisions that the Assembly will adopt during the next few crucial days. This new vision represents a quantum leap from the piecemeal and pilot projects of the past three decades. Drug-trafficking has become a multi-billion dollar industry, leaving no country untouched. The International Monetary Fund estimates that 2 to 5 per cent of the world's gross domestic product comes from laundered money. I strongly support the target date of the year 2003 for Member States to enact appropriate national legislation covering money-laundering. Indeed, this is long overdue.

(spoke in French)

Drug addiction, like drug-trafficking, knows no borders. It strikes without distinction as to class, gender, religion or race. It is a source of social division. It engenders crime, corruption and violence. It seriously strains social services and leads to the spread of AIDS.

Too many young people are seeing their lives destroyed by drugs. The desire for new experiences is natural to young people, and it is that curiosity that drug traffickers exploit unscrupulously. We must make our young people understand that there is nothing prestigious about drugs, that they are not a passport to a better life. To be convinced of that, one only needs to look at any drug addict.

(spoke in English)

Young people need their leaders to take action, together, to counter the production, trafficking and abuse of illegal drugs. Their future is in our hands. Over more than 30 years in the United Nations system, I have learned that when we pull together from all corners of the world and try to solve a problem, we will almost always succeed. Let this be one of those occasions. We will make mistakes along the way, that is certain, and we will suffer disappointments. But let us not cease trying. It is time for every nation to say "no" to drugs. It is time for all nations to say "yes" to the challenge of working towards a drug-free world.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs acting as preparatory body for the twentieth special session of the General Assembly (A/S-20/4)

The President: I now give the floor to the Chairman of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs acting as preparatory body for the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Alvaro Mendonça e Moura of Portugal.

Mr. Mendonça e Moura (Chairman of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs acting as preparatory body for the twentieth special session of the General Assembly): I have the honour to present to the General Assembly the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which acted as the preparatory body for this session.

As members may recall, a progress report on the preparation of the special session was presented to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session through the Economic and Social Council. In its decision 1998/207, the Council decided that the report of the preparatory body would be transmitted directly to the General Assembly. That report is before the Assembly as document A/S-20/4.

As decided by the Assembly, the deliberations of the Commission acting as preparatory body were open-ended, allowing for the full participation of all States Members of the United Nations, observers, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations, in line with established practice. The work of the preparatory body was very much facilitated by the sense of common purpose and the positive and constructive approach of Governments in addressing sensitive issues covered in the Political Declaration, the guiding principles of demand reduction and the action plans.

The preparatory body held its first session on 26 and 27 March 1997 and its second and final session from 16 to 21 March 1998. I am happy to report that, at the end of those 14 formal meetings and a large number of informal working group meetings, Member States were able to reach full consensus on all issues of drug policy contained in our agenda, as reflected in the report.

The preparatory process leading to this special session has contributed to furthering global understanding of our shared responsibility and to galvanizing the commitment of Governments in adopting strategies to tackle the global drug problem through a balanced and comprehensive approach, including both demand and supply reduction. I draw the Assembly's attention, in particular, to the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction, which represents a major step forward in the way the international community looks at the world drug problem and which will complement the international drug control treaties, and to the Political Declaration, which includes specific target dates for achieving the key objectives of the special session.

The outcome of the preparatory process stands, I believe, as an important landmark in the efforts of the international community to counter one of the more serious threats to the well-being of mankind, the independence of States, democracy and the dignity and hope of individuals and their families.

It was the wish of the preparatory body that the Assembly consider its report as a package of balanced recommendations and proposals, the result of a process of delicate negotiations and compromise. The preparatory committee was of the opinion, however, that to have maximum impact on public opinion this package should be not only endorsed but explicitly supported at a very

high political level at the General Assembly. The presence of so many Heads of State, Heads of Government and Ministers is already a sign of such support.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the Commission of Narcotic Drugs acting as the preparatory body of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly for his statement. The General Assembly is grateful to him and to those who participated in the preparatory body for their efforts to get this special session off to a good start.

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

Organization of the session

Draft decisions (A/S-20/4)

The President: Members are invited to turn to draft decisions I and III recommended by the preparatory body in its report contained in document A/S-20/4.

Draft decision I is entitled "Title of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly". May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt draft decision I?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: In accordance with the decision just taken, the title of the twentieth special session will read, "Twentieth special session of the General Assembly devoted to countering the world drug problem together".

Draft decision III is entitled "Organizational arrangements for the twentieth special session of the General Assembly". May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt draft decision III?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: On the basis of the decision just taken by the General Assembly on the recommendations of the preparatory body, the following arrangements shall apply to the twentieth special session:

The Vice-Presidents of the fifty-second regular session, who will serve in the same capacity at the twentieth special session, are the representatives of the following Member States: China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Guinea, Ireland, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Mongolia, Panama, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Togo, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam.

Regarding the Chairmen of the Main Committees of the twentieth special session, the Chairmen of the Main Committees of the fifty-second regular session will serve in the same capacity. Accordingly, I should like to inform the Assembly that the Chairmen of the Main Committees at this special session are the following: the Chairman of the First Committee, Mr. Mothusi Nkgowe of Botswana; the Chairman of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), Mr. Machivenyika Tobias Mapuranga of Zimbabwe; the Chairman of the Second Committee, Mr. Oscar de Rojas of Venezuela; the Chairman of the Third Committee, Mr. Alessandro Busacca of Italy; and the Chairman of the Fifth Committee, Mr. Anwarul Karim Chowdhury of Bangladesh.

As concerns the Sixth Committee, in the absence of its Chairman, the Vice-Chairman of the Sixth Committee, Mr. Craig Daniell of South Africa, will be Acting Chairman of the Committee for the duration of the special session.

In adopting the recommendations of the preparatory body, the Assembly has established an ad hoc committee of the whole, which will be designated as the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twentieth Special Session.

In accordance with the recommendations of the preparatory body just adopted by the General Assembly, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole will be a full member of the General Committee of the twentieth special session.

Concerning the election of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole, the preparatory body recommends that the Chairman of the preparatory body, Mr. Alvaro de Mendonça e Moura of Portugal, serve in the same capacity in the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly at its twentieth special session to elect him by acclamation?

It was so decided.

The President: I congratulate Mr. Alvaro de Mendonça e Moura on behalf of the General Assembly and on my own behalf and wish him well in the important responsibilities that he has just assumed.

The General Committee of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly has now been fully constituted.

We turn now to matters concerning the participation of speakers other than Member States in the work of the special session.

On the basis of the decision just taken by the General Assembly, observers may make statements in the general debate. States members of the specialized agencies of the United Nations that are not members of the United Nations — namely, the Cook Islands, the Holy See, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Switzerland, Tonga and Tuvalu — may participate in the work of the twentieth special session in the capacity of observers.

Accordingly, I should like to inform members that those States were invited to participate as observers in the general debate in plenary meeting.

Representatives of United Nations programmes and other entities of the United Nations system may make statements in the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole.

Representatives of non-governmental organizations designated by their constituencies may make statements in the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole.

In accordance with the decisions just adopted by the General Assembly, there will be nine plenary meetings over the three-day period, with three meetings per day from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. In view of the large number of representatives already inscribed on the list of speakers, I should like to inform members that I intend to start the plenary meetings punctually at 10 a.m., 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.

In this connection, I would like to assure the Assembly that I shall be in the Chair punctually at the scheduled time. I sincerely hope that all delegations will make a specific effort to cooperate in this regard.

With regard to the length of statements, I should like to remind delegates that, on the basis of the decisions just adopted by the Assembly, statements in the general debate should not exceed seven minutes.

In connection with the seven-minute limit, a light system has been installed at the speaker's rostrum which functions as follows: a green light will be activated at the start of the speaker's statement; an orange light will be activated 30 seconds before the end of the seven minutes; and a red light will be activated when the seven-minute limit has elapsed.

I should like to appeal to participants in the general debate to cooperate in limiting their statements to seven minutes so that all those inscribed on the list of speakers for a given meeting will be heard at that meeting.

As of now, there are 153 Member States and six observers on the list of speakers. I therefore strongly appeal to everybody who is going to make a statement to observe the time limit. I am sorry for this, but the preparatory body has established this tight schedule.

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

The President: The provisional agenda of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly is contained in document A/S-20/1, which has been recommended for adoption by the preparatory body in draft decision II, in paragraph 34 of its report.

In order to expedite its work, the Assembly may wish to consider the provisional agenda in plenary meeting without referring it to the General Committee.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to this procedure?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the provisional agenda as it appears in document A/S-20/1?

It was so decided.

The President: Regarding the allocation of items, on the basis of the decision taken by the General Assembly, agenda items 8 and 12 will be dealt with by the Assembly in plenary meeting, and agenda items 9 to 11 have been allocated to the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twentieth Special Session for its consideration.

Agenda item 8

General debate

The President: The first speaker is the President of the United States of America, His Excellency Mr. William Jefferson Clinton, to whom I give the floor.

President Clinton: We join today at this special session of the General Assembly to make common cause against the common threat of worldwide drug-trafficking and abuse. Let me begin by thanking my friend President Zedillo for his vision in making this session possible and for his courageous resolve against drugs. And I thank all the nations represented here which are committed to fight for our children's future by fighting drugs together.

Ten years ago, the United Nations adopted a path-breaking convention to spur cooperation against drug-trafficking. Today, the potential for that kind of cooperation has never been greater, or more needed. As divisive blocs and barriers have been dismantled around the world, as technology has advanced and democracy has spread, our peoples benefit more and more from nations working and learning together. Yet the very openness that enriches our lives is also exploited by criminals, especially drug traffickers.

Today we come here to say that no nation is so large and powerful that it can conquer drugs alone; none is too small to make a difference. All share a responsibility to take up the battle. Therefore, we will stand as one against this threat to our security and our future.

The stakes are high, for the drug empires erode the foundations of democracies, corrupt the integrity of market economies, and menace the lives, the hopes, the futures of families on every continent. Let there be no doubt: this is ultimately a struggle for human freedom. For the first time in history, more than half the world's people live under Governments of their own choosing. In virtually every country, we see the expansion of expressions of individual liberty. We cannot see it all squandered for millions of people because of a perverse combination of personal weakness and national neglect. We have to prove to the drug traffickers that they are wrong. We are determined, and we can make a difference. Nations have shown that with determined and relentless efforts we can turn this evil tide.

In the United States, drug use has dropped 49 per cent since 1979. Recent studies show that drug use by our young people is stabilizing, and in some categories declining. Overall cocaine use has dropped 70 per cent since 1985. The crack epidemic has begun to recede. Last year, our Coast Guard seized more than 100,000 pounds of cocaine. Today, Americans spend 37 per cent less on drugs than a decade ago; that means over $34 billion reinvested in our society rather than being squandered on drugs.

Many other nations are making great strides. Mexico set records for eradication in 1997. Peruvian coca cultivation has been slashed 42 per cent since 1995. Colombia's growing aerial eradication programme has destroyed tens of thousands of hectares of coca. Thailand's opium-poppy growth is steadily decreasing, this year alone down 24 per cent. The United States is also a partner in global law enforcement and interdiction efforts, funding anti-drug and anti-crime training for more than 8,250 officials last year. In 1997, Latin American and Caribbean Governments seized some 166 metric tons of cocaine.

Better-trained police with improved information sharing are arresting more drug traffickers around the world. Joint information networks on suspicious financial transactions are working in dozens of countries to put the brakes on money-laundering. By the end of the year 2000, the United States will provide assistance to an additional 20 countries to establish and strengthen these financial intelligence units. We must and we can deprive drug traffickers of the dirty money that fuels their deadly trade.

We are finding strength in numbers, from the anti-drug alliance the Western hemisphere forged at the recent Summit of the Americas to the steps against drugs and crime the G-8 leaders agreed to take last month. The United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), under Executive Director Arlacchi's leadership, is combating drug production, drug-trafficking and drug abuse in some of the most difficult corners of the world, while helping to make sure the money we spend brings maximum results. I applaud the UNDCP's goal of dramatically reducing coca and opium-poppy cultivation by 2008. We in the United States will do our part to make this goal a reality.

For all the achievements of recent years, we must not confuse progress with success. The spectre of drugs still haunts us. To prevail, we must do more, with dynamic national strategies, intensified international cooperation and greater resources. The debate between

drug-supplying and drug-consuming nations about whose responsibility the drug problem is has gone on too long. Let us be frank: this debate has not advanced the fight against drugs. Pointing fingers is distracting. It does not dismantle a single cartel, help a single addict, prevent a single child from trying and perhaps dying from heroin. Besides, the lines between supply countries, demand countries and transit countries are increasingly blurred. Drugs are every nation's problem, and every nation must act to fight them — on the streets, around the kitchen table and around the world.

This is the commitment of the United States. Year after year our Administration has provided the largest anti-drug budgets in history. Our request for next year exceeds $17 billion, nearly $6 billion of which will be devoted to demand reduction. Our comprehensive National Drug Control Strategy aims to cut American drug use and access by half over the next 10 years — through strengthened law enforcement, tougher interdiction, improved treatment and expanded prevention efforts. We are determined to build a drug-free America and to join with others to combat drugs around the world.

We believe attitudes drive actions. Therefore, we wage first the battle in the minds of our young people. Working with Congress and the private sector, the United States has launched a major anti-drug youth media campaign. Now, when our children turn on the television, surf the Internet or listen to the radio, they will get the powerful message that drugs are wrong and can kill them. I will be asking Congress to extend this programme through 2002. With congressional support and matching dollars from the private sector, we will commit to a five-year, $2 billion public-private partnership to teach our children to stay off drugs. Other nations, including Mexico, Venezuela and Brazil, are launching similar campaigns. I had the pleasure of talking with the President of Brazil about this at some length yesterday. I hope all our nations can work together to spread the word to children all around the world: drugs destroy young lives; don't let them destroy yours.

The United States also is working to create a virtual university for the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, using modern technology to share knowledge and experience across national borders. We will launch this effort next month in New Mexico with an international training course on reducing drug demand. Government officials and other professionals from Mexico, El Salvador and Honduras will work with experts on drug abuse and gang prevention from the United States. The course will be linked via satellite to the United States Information Agency's Worldnet system, so that anyone with access to Worldnet can tune in.

Our National Institute for Drug Abuse in the United States, which funds 85 per cent of global research on drugs, will post on the Internet live videotapes of its drug prevention and treatment workshops. This means that anyone anywhere with access to a computer and modem — a parent whose child is addicted to drugs, a doctor trying to help, a researcher looking for a cure — anyone will be able to obtain the latest, most advanced medical knowledge on drugs.

Such sharing of information, experience and ideas is more important than ever. That is why I am especially pleased to announce the establishment of an international drug fellowship programme that will enable professionals from all around the world to come to the United States and work with our drug-fighting agencies. The focus will be on the priorities of this special session: demand reduction, stimulants, precursors, money-laundering, judicial cooperation, alternative development and eradication of illicit crops. These fellowships will help all of us. They will help our nations to learn from one another, while building a global force of skilled and experienced drug crusaders. Together, we must extend the long arm of the law and the hand of compassion to match the global reach of this problem.

Let us leave here determined to act together, in a spirit of trust and respect — at home and abroad, against demand and supply, using all the tools at our disposal — to win the global fight against drugs and build a safe and healthy twenty-first century for our children.

The President: I thank the President of the United States of America for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Zedillo, President of the United Mexican States.

President Zedillo (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mexico is pleased that the United Nations is holding a special session of the General Assembly devoted to the world drug problem.

Drugs are today a serious threat to all forms of civilization. Drugs destroy lives, wreck families, disintegrate communities and weaken nations. Drug use deprives the human being of freedom and dignity,

prevents individual and collective self-improvement and is especially detrimental to the hope embodied in our children and youth.

No nation, however powerful, no society, however developed and no family is free from the threat of drugs. We are facing the threat of an enormous economic power. We face the threat of a violent and corrupt power that respects no borders and does not yield to any legal or moral code. We face the threat of a criminal power that has alarmingly expanded its links with other forms of organized crime, such as money-laundering, arms trafficking, terrorism and kidnapping. For many countries, drug-trafficking is also a threat to national security and democratic life, to social stability and to the integrity of its institutions.

Criminal organizations devoted to drug-trafficking bring together individuals from many different nationalities and move through many countries. These are multinational organizations capable of producing and processing their harmful merchandise in one place, shipping it across any border and marketing it in distant countries. They are also capable of using the international financial system to shift their earnings around. In short, we are dealing with a global threat, with a phenomenon of multinational criminality.

Since it is a global problem, it demands a global response, a response from all and shared by all. All of us must do more, much more, for the sake of all. We must decide now to undertake an unprecedented cooperation effort, based on a new strategy that is global, comprehensive and balanced: global, in order to involve all countries without exception and also without recriminations; comprehensive, in order to address all phases of the drug cycle, from production, sale and trafficking to consumption and its related crimes.

In this context, we must greatly intensify efforts to reduce demand. Demand reduction should be seen as a public-health issue as well as a problem related to social behaviour and values. It must be dealt with through medical, educational, training and cultural programmes.

An overwhelming part of world demand comes from the countries with the largest economic capacities. But the highest human, social and institutional cost in meeting such demand is borne by the producing and the transit countries. It is our men and women who first die combating drug-trafficking. It is our communities that are first to suffer from violence, and our institutions that are first undermined by corruption. It is our Governments that are the first to have to shift valuable resources needed to fight poverty to serve as the first bulwark in this war.

That is why we have the right to demand that this strategy be a balanced one so that each country can recognize that in the fight against drug-trafficking, we are all responsible. We have the same rights and obligations, and we all must respect the sovereignty of each nation. It should be balanced also so that no one becomes a judge of others, and so that no one feels entitled to violate the laws of other countries for the sake of enforcing its own.

Mexico proposes, therefore, to give the United Nations a mandate to articulate and encourage the global fight against drugs as a high priority. To that end, the United Nations should facilitate each country's elaboration of a plan of action with concrete and verifiable targets; each country's adherence to the commitments agreed upon in this meeting; and each country's having adequate legislation against money-laundering and drug-related crimes. The United Nations also must periodically and objectively assess progress in each country.

Let us use the international leadership and moral authority of the United Nations to work for a drug-free world. Mexico has full confidence that in this task, as in all of its missions, our Organization will act in strict compliance with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Drug-trafficking and drug addiction are not invincible. We can defeat them. United, we will defeat them.

Mexico reaffirms its commitment to bear its share of the global responsibility to fight drug-trafficking, and it renews its expression of confidence that united, we will build a drug-free world for the children and young people of the twenty-first century.

The President: I thank the President of the United Mexican States for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Jorge Sampaio, President of the Portuguese Republic.

President Sampaio *(spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation):* The importance of the drug issue, which is being discussed here in all its multiple facets, requires serious and profound reflection.

Portugal, which chaired the preparatory body, has from the first been actively committed to preparing the special session. In fact, I should like to take this opportunity to thank all countries for having cooperated with that body.

My country is equally involved in various international organizations devoted to the drug problem, a fact that has helped us to gain a global overview of this subject.

The last decades have shown that the drug issue is becoming increasingly critical, leaving out few countries in the world. It is affecting each and every one of us more and more, and it affects us all. This is, in fact, a worldwide problem.

For a long time Europe and other Western countries tended to consider themselves only as drug consumers, while others were termed producers. There was an erroneous idea underlying this somewhat Manichaean separation, which was that if countries did not produce drugs, then the problem would cease to exist. Nowadays, no one can uphold this separation with any degree of rigour. We are all producer States, we are all consumer States, we are all transit States. Synthetic drugs and the sale of the precursors that allow certain drugs to be manufactured make Western countries as responsible as the rest.

Given this framework, our joint response must reflect a genuine international solidarity, based on the assumption of shared responsibility, in order to face up to such a decisive issue for the harmonious development of our societies.

The terrible effects of the drug phenomenon can be felt at various levels. Drugs create a physical and psychic addiction and damage the public health of our communities. A dramatic example of this is the spread of serious contagious diseases. Drugs are also behind a disturbing rise in consumption-related crimes, whose repercussions are known to us all. They cause the emergence of powerful drug-trafficking organizations, encourage corruption and, in some cases, endanger political and social stability. The drug phenomenon is also responsible for the emergence of dangerous evidence of drug consumers' marginalization and segregation.

It would be both advisable and enlightening to calculate the extremely high costs of this problem in terms of public expenditure. The problem, then, is fundamentally one of safety and democratic stability, but also of health. It is therefore essential that policies designed to control this problem should reflect a fair balance so as to avoid widening the gap between drug addicts and the rest of society and creating greater difficulties in their recovery and social integration.

A new policy is required — and I am sure that we all share that conviction — a new policy that will, above all, influence the factors that lead to the appearance and development of so-called deviant behaviours. A new drug policy will necessarily be socially preventive, particularly as regards young people. It must involve them and coexist with education, jobs, training, health care, urban planning and family support. A new policy will have to confront risk-reducing programmes seriously and conscientiously, from a necessary public-health perspective. A new policy should not naively confuse reality with any type of demagogic faith, but be based on objective information and multidisciplinary research. In short, a new policy must address the reduction in supply and demand in a balanced way.

It is becoming increasingly necessary for us to share our successes and learn, always learn from the successful experiences. It is also becoming increasingly necessary to develop cooperation in the fight against trafficking through the exchange of information and the reduction of demand.

Experience has shown that the most efficient programmes in reducing urban crime and demand are those developed and supported, at the local level, by towns, schools, non-governmental organizations and the media themselves. To that end we will certainly be developing projects in Europe which we will extend to Latin America, in order to create networks of shared experiences.

Prior to the forthcoming Ibero-American Summit in Oporto, I myself will be convening a seminar in October, supported by the Portuguese Government and various European bodies, which will be attended by European and Latin American experts. The core issue will, of course, be the intensification of drug cooperation in these two regions, particularly in the fields of information and the reduction of demand. I have reason to hope that it will constitute a valid contribution to combating this common scourge.

We have here in this Assembly a unique opportunity to make decisions that will drastically limit the scope of

this problem in our countries. The aims we propose to reach in the next 10 years are ambitious but essential. The strong points that will emerge from this special session are the continued eradication of illicit crops, the strengthening of international cooperation in all areas, the reduction of demand — an aim announced for the first time by the United Nations — a better surveillance of money-laundering mechanisms, increased judicial cooperation in this area and the control of precursors and synthetic drugs.

The political declaration we will be approving the day after tomorrow is above all the clear expression of our political will to stand up to this problem resolutely. We must now ensure that our political will does not cease with the consensus achieved here. The United Nations will be at the forefront of all coordination and support efforts, demonstrating the importance and irreplaceable nature of its action.

I would also like to mention the subject of financial resources, which are fundamental to helping countries that are committed to the eradication and replacement of illicit crops within the framework of an integrated economic development. Portugal recently increased its contribution to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme. We will soon give financial expression to our political will to cooperate with the United Nations in this field.

There can be no efficient fight against drugs without a firm and determined political will. That will require that we seriously identify drugs as one of the major evils of our times, an evil we must confront by calling on what is today an unequivocal and accepted concept of shared responsibility. More than ever, we must abide by the motto of this special session: "Together we can meet this challenge".

The President: I thank the President of the Portuguese Republic for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by The Honourable Romano Prodi, Prime Minister of the Italian Republic.

Mr. Prodi (Italy): I am very pleased to participate, together with so many heads of State and Government, in this special session of the General Assembly, an event that marks a watershed in the international mobilization against this plague.

Eight years have passed since the last special session — eight years of profound transformations that have left their mark on our societies and our perceptions of the complex and varied phenomenon of drugs.

Today, we have to radically improve our methods of tackling the problem. We must realize that fighting drugs requires a scientific and cultural adjustment to the ever-changing realities in our countries. Consider, for example, the spread of new synthetic drugs among the younger segments of the population, including pre-teens, who were previously not at risk. We must never lose sight of the problem's international dimension. As we all know, drugs are often produced in some countries but consumed in others, crossing national, regional and continental borders. To respond to this transnational global challenge, we need internationally concerted action. This is why today's gathering is so important.

To ensure the success of this special session, for the past year we have been hard at work in the sessions of the Preparatory Committee held at the United Nations Office at Vienna. Let me be the first to say that we have done a good job.

Thanks to the cooperative spirit of all the participants, industrialized and emerging countries alike, we have succeeded in preparing a set of balanced draft declarations and commitments. These texts address every aspect of the problem in a comprehensive and even-handed fashion. They are the international community's best and most up-to-date response to this historic challenge. At this special session, we will adopt declarations and programmes of action that contain timely, detailed proposals to strengthen judicial cooperation; reduce the trafficking and spread of synthetic drugs — and I think we are probably heavily underestimating the dimensions and devastating effects of chemical drugs; control the diversion of precursor chemicals; counter the laundering of money derived from narcotics trafficking; and forge local agreements to replace illegal crops with alternatives.

On the last point, we hope that crop replacement agreements can be reached first with legitimate local Governments, but also after hearing and wherever possible heeding the suggestions and concerns of trade unions, farmers' associations and human rights organizations. We must activate new international synergies to tackle an issue vital to many countries: providing credible, effective markets for alternative crops. The political declaration that we approve will unequivocally demonstrate the international community's determination to combat this plague and, in the words of

the text, to achieve "significant and measurable results" by the year 2008.

The global threat of drugs to our societies makes us even more convinced that national strategies can work only within a framework of international cooperation based on a globally concerted approach. Italy will thus continue to support the United Nations and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), under the strong leadership of Mr. Arlacchi, whose activities we greatly appreciate. We will continue to work closely with UNDCP on implementing its many initiatives, confident that they will bear significant results within the next few years.

However, none of this is possible unless the UNDCP has adequate resources. Italy has always been one of the top financial supporters of the Programme. This year, we increased our contribution from 12 billion to 15 billion lire. We invite other countries and the international financial institutions to join us in putting the organization on more solid financial grounds, because financial contributions are the true test of our determination to launch a concrete, substantive attack on illicit drugs.

There is also a domestic side to this dramatic problem. This is not simply to maintain the required balance between safeguarding the principle of sovereignty and the need for international cooperation. It is also to guarantee a more ready capacity to evaluate and test the effectiveness of policies to reduce the supply and demand of drugs in local, regional and continental realities within the framework of treaties and conventions signed by individual nations. Ten years after the Vienna Convention, Europe is dealing with unprecedented problems and consequently with unprecedented roles and tasks. Consider the new challenges to the fight against drug-trafficking created as a side-effect of the elimination of our national borders; but also consider our specific experiences in local, social and health policy that can make a unique contribution to the United Nations discussion.

Our primary strategic goal has always been to reduce the phenomenon through actions to cut both supply and demand. The key to this plan is an information and prevention campaign that capitalizes on the talents and creativity of young people and involves families, schools and civil society as a whole.

An equally important component is our development of a network of public and private services to rehabilitate former drug addicts, restore their health and get them back into work and society. This means going beyond a punitive, repressive approach based on imprisonment. The ineffectiveness of such an approach has been proven again and again. It alienates drug users, makes them harder to reach and increases their social and health risks.

In Italy's experience, programmes to reduce the damaging effects of drugs have had a solid impact. They have allowed us to make contact with drug addicts who have not yet elected to seek help from public or private rehabilitation centres. Such contacts should be developed not simply to offer addicts better health care, but to give them an opportunity to choose a better life.

It is within this perspective that Italy will continue its full-fledged commitment to a preventive strategy that mobilizes and activates such key forces as the family, the school system, the work environment and the media.

The initiatives we adopt at this session and our ongoing commitment at the national level in the war against drugs must send a clear signal to all our respective public opinions: as individual States and members of the international community, we will take decisive action to eliminate this scourge of our century. Our operative choices and concrete policies will highlight a crucial distinction: those who are spreading this plague and making enormous profits from it will be fought with all our strength; but those who are its victims shall receive our solidarity and support.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister of Italy for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Hugo Banzer Suárez, Constitutional President of the Republic of Bolivia.

President Banzer Suárez *(interpretation from Spanish)*: This special session of the General Assembly is marked by two historic moments: the tenth anniversary of the signing at Vienna of the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and the evaluation of the work done, and the definition of actions which our countries and Governments should henceforth pursue in order to put an end to drug-trafficking.

We are gathered here in New York for the purpose of reaffirming our determination, at the end of this

century, not to pass on to the generations of the next millennium the tragedy of drugs that is afflicting mankind.

New, disturbing realities have emerged during this decade. Countries that before were only drug producers are today also consumers, while those countries that once were affected only by consumption have now become producers. Drug-trafficking globalizes crime.

When I assumed office in August 1997, I developed a true anti-drug policy that took into account the fact that drug-trafficking jeopardizes the health and moral integrity of society, distorts the economy, corrupts and damages institutions, distorts the international image and harms the sovereignty of the countries affected. I therefore resolved to extricate Bolivia from the drug-trafficking circuit within the space of five years, which is the length of my mandate. The national dialogue that I initiated so that civil society could take a stand on this and other matters linked to our future endorsed and approved this commitment.

Bolivian society is mobilized to confront the illegal drug trade and its criminal effects. The ones who are resisting are those who are in the service of the drug trade and are entrenched in circles linked to illegal coca production. It is true that the magnitude of the challenge sows reasonable doubts among some Bolivians as to whether we will have the necessary strength to defeat this evil that conspires against our security and offends the dignity of nations. To a great extent, the answer to those concerns lies here in this concerted multilateral endeavour and in the will of the States of the international community.

Bolivia is doing its part. It has decided to assume its responsibility, and it has done so well aware of its limitations, but also aware that we do not want our society to be destroyed by drugs. I said as much at the General Assembly last year, and I wish to reaffirm those concepts.

We shall use dialogue and consultation with the farmers who produce coca in order to eradicate the illegal crops once and for all. We shall be uncompromising with drug traffickers. We will not give them a moment's rest until they are gone for ever from the history of Bolivia. To that end, we have designed and adopted a national strategy to combat drug-trafficking, which is based on four pillars: alternative development, prevention, eradication and interdiction.

We are convinced of the need to tackle all of these tasks with the same vigour, without emphasizing one to the detriment of the others. This will allow us to make continuous and steady progress. It will enable us to give the same emphasis to each of the pillars underlying our proposal, whose goals are to provide prospects for a decent life to 35,000 families linked with the coca-cocaine circuit; to eradicate the 38,000 hectares of illegal coca plantations that are now believed to exist; to combat relentlessly those who deal in and profit from this degrading business; and to give new opportunities to those who have had the misfortune to fall into the habit of consumption.

The financing required for the five-year period totals $952 million, of which $108 million is destined for eradication, $700 million for alternative development, $129 million for interdiction and $15 million for prevention and rehabilitation. My Government is committed to contributing at least 15 per cent of the financing. With that, we will require $809 million from the international community, which represents an approximate average of $161 million per year.

Today at this special session, I officially submit to the United Nations the Bolivian strategy to combat drug-trafficking. The figures are detailed in operational programmes and specific plans of action.

The financial sacrifices for Bolivia is enormous. It means postponing programmes that are vital to the socio-economic development of my people at a time when we are striving to eradicate extreme poverty, which is undoubtedly also related to the coca-cocaine circuit. In a country of approximately 8 million people, nearly a million children under the age of seven are poor. Consequently, each dollar we devote to combating drug-trafficking has painful social implications. Even so, we are prepared to do it. Bolivia is certain that the international community will contribute to this battle, because it is a comprehensive one. If Bolivia wins, the international community stands to gain.

Here in the Assembly, I propose a world alliance to combat drugs, as a concrete expression of the responsibility that all nations, large and small, share with respect to this evil of the century that is now drawing to a close. I propose the creation of a multilateral consultative group for evaluation, coordination and control to serve as the forum to secure and assign the resources and programmes needed in support of those countries that have resolved, with defined policies and plans, to combat drug-trafficking.

I propose that the United Nations, through its specialized mechanisms, promote meetings of donor countries and organizations to make it possible to carry out the Bolivian strategy, and those of other nations, against drugs.

When I hand over my presidential sash in August 2002, as the leader who guided his country through the transition into the next millennium, I shall also leave a country freed of the stigma of drugs, with a people proud of having been the first in the world to declare all-out war on drug-trafficking. That is my commitment to Bolivians, my contribution to this struggle that knows no borders, and that is my decision as President.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Bolivia for his statement.

(spoke from French)

I call now on His Excellency Mr. Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic.

President Chirac (*interpretation from French*): I expect our special session to give fresh worldwide impetus to the war on drugs. The spread of this scourge is alarming. A real awakening to this fact is essential, and an all-out offensive must be waged.

Drugs corrupt. Drugs kill. We are all aware of the ravages they cause, especially among the young. They choose their first victims among the most susceptible teenagers as they emerge from childhood. Once drugs have them in their power, they lead them down the road to death. They relinquish their hold only at the price of terrible suffering, only after exposing their victims to the risk of AIDS and other infectious diseases. They are an ordeal for families. They foster delinquency, violence and crime. In all our countries, they breed an economy of corruption, a mafia economy, which grows and strengthens.

International action is making strides, but the scourge progresses even faster. The consumption of opiates has increased by 20 per cent in ten years. Drugs are becoming more varied. Their use is spreading round the globe. Drugs are reaching an ever-larger and ever-younger population.

Production is expanding and penetrating into new regions. Laboratories, which have become smaller and more mobile, are more dispersed. In some parts of the world, political upheavals and economic chaos have favoured a proliferation of clandestine factories manufacturing new synthetic drugs.

The drug economy is growing stronger. In the cultivating countries it exploits the economic vulnerability of the peasant population. Whole regions are under the thumb of traffickers organized into mafia-type gangs. The drug networks then make use of offshore financial havens and the banking systems of intermediary countries that are developed enough to allow for money-laundering but not regulated or policed enough to stop it. In the developed countries, drug money poisons the economic and social life of the most problem-beset urban neighbourhoods.

Behind this corrosion of social order lie, of course, powerful, internationally organized crime interests which not only master the latest technology but laugh at national borders. These interests maintain globe-spanning networks, gangs and even armies. They corrupt businesses, governments and whole economies. They use their colossal profits — larger, it is said, than the gross domestic product of all of Africa — to extend illicit crop-growing, market new chemical substances and to exert control over other criminal and terrorist activities.

The time has come, in the face of this world-girdling menace, to demonstrate our countries' determination. In every corner of the globe it must be realized that the United Nations is battle-ready for the fight against drugs.

We must counter-attack on every front — the production of illicit substances, the drug trade and drug profits and, not least, the human misery upon which the traffickers feed. Our strategy must be grounded in clear principles.

The first principle is co-responsibility. The evil is worldwide. Drug elimination cannot be left to a single category of country, whether it be producer or consumer. Supply and demand must be reduced simultaneously. I propose that we equip ourselves with an impartial and universal observation tool for appraising the situation and ensuring that our decisions are followed up. International legitimacy has its home in the United Nations. It is there, within the framework of existing institutions, that we must fashion this vital instrument.

The second principle is solidarity — solidarity among our nations first of all, since no country can delude itself into thinking that it can throw off the drug

menace unaided. Bilateral and multilateral funding must be mobilized to help producing countries follow the path of real alternative development. Grants to uproot crops are not enough. Coherent region-wide programmes are needed.

But of course, the solidarity in question must also apply within our own societies, to the addicts themselves. Many of them wish to escape from their nightmare. The language they need to hear is not only that of repression; they need to hear the language of human caring. They need to be shepherded, guided, accepted. They need to find a way to change their lives, enter society, forge new social and emotional ties. This aspect of solidarity should not be neglected. It implies organizing the necessary resources and devising new methods.

The third principle is firmness — firmness at home and abroad in the action of the judiciary, the police and the customs services, while respecting individual rights. There must be no safe oasis for the crime syndicates. The efforts of each of us in our own lands must not be frustrated by the laxity of certain States. Anti-drug legislation must be harmonized throughout the world. We need to strengthen and modernize our legal and police cooperation systems.

We should also ensure firm oversight of the financial institutions and offshore centres, which make money-laundering easier. In too many countries, regulation is still inadequate and inadequately enforced.

We also need, finally, to be resolute in refusing to trivialize drugs. Sometimes the question of adopting a more tolerant attitude towards what are erroneously called "soft" drugs is raised. Some even go so far as to present the properties of certain psychotropic substances in a favourable light. But we must tell young people the truth. Even when a drug does not in itself create real physical addiction, it threatens a psychological dependence that is no less serious. It modifies the personality and exposes the individual to an obsession. It affects a person's ability to live, to act and to build and to form bonds with others. It distances, isolates and marginalizes. It leads to the fringes of criminality. Little by little, it encloses the person in a world of silence and suffering. It opens the way to increasingly brutal forms of dependence.

In confronting such dangers, I believe in the value and the effectiveness of prohibitions that match the seriousness of the situations at which they are directed. The State must exercise its authority to ensure that they are respected. We must make young people understand that with regard to drugs, defying prohibitions is not a victory over society but a defeat for themselves.

This session must be the point of departure for a more global and more vigorous form of international action. France stands alongside the United Nations in giving the global struggle against drugs a scope and degree of effectiveness commensurate with the hostile forces that we must battle.

History must record that the great crusade of nations against drugs started here in New York. It is a crusade that must not cease until we have done away with this cancer that is eating away at our societies.

Our peoples must know that we will go all the way in this battle for life and that nothing will stop us.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the President of the French Republic for his statement.

(*spoke in English*)

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Miguel Angel Rodríguez, Constitutional President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

President Rodríguez (*interpretation from Spanish*): The twentieth century is drawing to a close amid disorder and fear, and the enemy is at our door. Our democracies are threatened by the assault of drugs, a colossal empire of evil that gives refuge to and reinforces all of the pathologies of humankind, destabilizing the State, weakening democracy, perverting politics, contaminating the economy, corrupting wealth, appropriating technology, exploiting poverty, destroying health, annihilating human dignity and undermining the excellence that is required of us today. Its advance cannot be halted by geography, age, economic standing or power. Drugs have victimized us all equally. This is the first form of globalized aggression in history.

What do we gain from our victory over totalitarianism if drugs destroy the human person? Fortunately, we have not yet lost our awareness of the danger, which is why we are here, at this universal forum, thanks to the welcome initiative of the Government of Mexico. There is still time, though it is short. This is an eminently human problem.

In designing an appropriate and effective strategy, therefore, the human dimension of this scourge must be

our point of departure. The Government of Costa Rica hopes to see many more examples like that of Patricia Barrantes, a brilliant student in Guanacaste in the north-east of my country, who was selected by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to deliver to the Secretary-General, on behalf of millions of young people throughout the world, the Youth Charter for a Twenty-first Century Free of Drugs. We cannot fail the youth of the world. We cannot allow their right to excellence to be put at risk.

This concern for childhood and youth must give priority to policies directed at preventing drug consumption by pooling the efforts of educators, students, parents, community organizations, churches and the media, as well as at strengthening treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration processes for the victims of drugs, with the support of non-governmental organizations that have experience in this area.

Mr. Al-Khalifa (Qatar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We have come to this gathering because we are prepared to fight, but we are convinced that we cannot make progress if we do not first ask ourselves why the world has become so vulnerable to the snare of drugs and why this danger has found fertile ground for its formidable and deadly growth. Why? That is a crucial question. We cannot forge a new international order if we allow the causes of its destruction to remain alive.

Why have we become so vulnerable? Allow me to respond in general terms, because I can find no other response. We have made the world and the human being empty of meaning, depriving people of their basic landmarks and making everything relative. We have exploited what is best so as to sow what is worst. We have broken down the moral structure of the family. We have stripped education and daily life of values and content. We have thrust young people and adolescents into turmoil.

Given this order of things, the cultural and moral influence exerted in the world by the developed countries deserves particular attention and, on the basis of their great influence, demands that they become aware of their responsibility. We appeal to the moral responsibility of the powerful.

What is the first solution? The President of the Czech Republic, Václav Havel, has given us a precise answer. It is the question of determining whether, in one way or another, we can manage to place morality above politics and responsibility above profit, giving meaning to the human community and content to human language, in such a way that the human being as a whole is the focus of events in society, that people are in full possession of their rights and dignity, responsible for themselves because they are linked with something higher than themselves and capable of sacrificing some things — even their private lives and their own prosperity — so that life can have meaning.

In brief, he adds that we must bring about an existential revolution that presupposes a moral reconstruction of society, a new human order that cannot be replaced by a political order, a new experience of being, a new sense of being rooted in the universe, a higher responsibility, an internal relationship with others and with the human community.

The forthcoming celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, whose preamble proclaims, as an absolute truth, the dignity and worth of the human person, should be an ideal time to delve more deeply into this fundamental issue. I propose that on that occasion we invest our efforts in human values, in a shared code of essential ethics, such as the President of Venezuela, Rafael Caldera, has promoted at the inter-American level, in order to nourish and invigorate our policies and educational systems.

To be effective, the fight against drugs and all their manifestations requires international cooperation and multinational strategies, as are being proposed here in this Assembly, and as have been proposed by the Organization of American States through the Inter-American Commission for the Control of Drug Abuse. But within that indispensable framework, each country or group of countries can carry out innovative, constructive initiatives that are not mutually exclusive in the world-wide fight against drug-trafficking.

I wish to refer here to Central America. All our countries live today in the nurturing embrace of democracy. In the previous decade, the main threat to peace was insurgency and the radicalism of various groups, fuelled by global tensions. Today, the greatest threat comes from drug-trafficking. This challenge demands new responses. One of these is the transformation of our armies into civilian police forces highly trained in the task of protecting our peoples from the aggression of the drug cartels.

Our area's armies were conceived and structured under a system that has now been abandoned, and are not suited successfully to face the enormous challenges to regional security that have arisen in the post-cold-war era. It is now essential that they be transformed also to bring about the political modernization and social needs of burgeoning democracy. Such professional police organizations would be less costly than existing military structures, and such a change would release resources for education and social infrastructure. If, rather than the $500 million Central America spends annually on defence, half that amount were allocated to the work of police organizations, we would have $250 million for adequately building and equipping schools: in five years, we could educate another million Central American children. I call on Central American countries to make that historic gesture, to set that example, which ought to receive due recognition from the more developed countries, which are the principal consumers of drugs.

Because of our particular geographical conditions — and our guarantees of democracy and respect for human rights — Costa Rica runs the risk of being used by drug barons as an area for the supply and distribution of drugs on their way to the major international centres of consumption. Our fight against this has involved enormous sacrifices. For a small country like Costa Rica, therefore, international cooperation is essential; we cannot forfeit the resources that we must invest in education, in health, in training human capital, and in competing in today's knowledge-based economy. International cooperation in information exchanges, training, and the provision of improved technology and appropriate police equipment, and in the area of prevention, rehabilitation and law enforcement, is vital for the success of the strategies we are designing in this world forum.

Fifty years ago, we Costa Ricans, in a spirit of solidarity, disarmed ourselves and placed ourselves on a footing of peace; today, we call for international cooperation in this new framework of shared security to pursue the war against drugs. We call for this on behalf of all the world's children and young people.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I thank the Constitutional President of the Republic of Costa Rica for his statement.

The General Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Carlos Saúl Menem, President of the Argentine Republic.

President Menem (*interpretation from Spanish*): I convey cordial greetings to the President of the General Assembly and to the Secretary-General, to whom I wish the greatest success in his endeavours.

This is the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the 1988 United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. We are obliged to recognize that the consumption of and trafficking in illicit drugs have dramatically increased, along with related offences. This increase is of concern to all who are working to fight that modern form of slavery: drug addiction. This phenomenon has permeated all nations and all institutions. Because it has become globalized, the response too must be global.

That is why it was necessary to agree on an approach involving shared responsibility that would put an end to the dichotomies that sometimes gave rise to sterile divisions among countries. The classification of countries as producer countries, transit countries and consumer countries has been shown not to be an effective approach. Such divisions always led to mutual recriminations among Governments that did not understand the need to work together by strengthening international cooperation.

Accordingly, the principle of shared responsibility, which my country supports, involves the assumption that this is everybody's problem. On that basis we can begin to view genuine international cooperation as part of a balanced system in which each country has a role to play.

But to succeed in this struggle, we must be clear about our principles and our objectives. The first is a balance between curbing supply and reducing demand. We must also be concerned, in the same way and with the same energy, about informing and warning our societies that drugs destroy lives, communities, freedom, development and the future of mankind.

We must also cure and rehabilitate the sick people who have succumbed to drug addiction, and provide them with opportunities for social reintegration, restoring hope for an honourable life. For us, each drug trafficker is an enemy, just as each addict is a human being whom we can and should return to society, treating him or her with love and professional skill.

We are not going to let drugs dominate us. That is why we want to ask families, educators, leaders, non-governmental organizations and the media to help us in

this life-giving project: to achieve nothing less than a drug-free world.

Of special concern to us are related crimes. We must devote attention in particular to monitoring industries involved in the production and trade in chemical precursors. We must also develop cooperation in the legal sphere to ensure that there are no safe havens for offenders and to prevent the money-laundering that enables drug traffickers to disguise their ill-gotten gains.

It would also be appropriate to consider the possibility of internationalizing prosecution for the crime of drug-trafficking by means of an international criminal court. We should also bring about crop substitution, while respecting farmers and providing commercial outlets for alternative products.

The decision that we are to adopt here together requires us first to strengthen national organs and institutions to carry out their particular obligations. In this regard, I wish to stress that at the hemispheric level we are striving towards the achievement of these same goals. We adopted important guidelines on money-laundering at the meeting held in Buenos Aires in December 1995. In November 1996, the countries of America adopted a fundamental document, called the "Anti-drug strategy in the hemisphere", which contains the concept of shared responsibility. Recently, in Santiago, Chile, at the second Summit of the Americas, the Presidents approved a hemispheric alliance and an initiative to establish within the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission a multilateral process for governmental evaluation.

With regard to my own country, I wish to point out that upon assuming office I decided to create a secretariat directly accountable to the presidency and responsible for internal aspects of the drug problem. In our experience, having strong structures with decision-making and policy-making capacity is a necessary condition for success, and my country will take such an approach. Our legislation enables us to maintain appropriate control over the primary manifestations of crimes related to drug-trafficking and other related offences. However, the new complexity of criminal endeavours has prompted us to place before the Congress a new and broader draft law in order to attack money-laundering. With this, we hope to be able to join decisively in the international effort in this area.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that I believe that the role of the family and of family values is the decisive and most potent force for achieving a drug-free world in the twenty-first century. I am optimistic because the international community has always taken up the challenges that confront it. I know that the actions that we will adopt in the Assembly will enable us to meet these challenges successfully.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I thank the President of the Argentine Republic for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Leonel Fernández Reyna, Constitutional President of the Dominican Republic.

President Fernández Reyna: Drug production, trafficking and consumption is the most serious threat facing mankind at the end of twentieth century as it tries to ensure the physical and mental health of individuals, the tranquillity of families and communities and the stability of governments, as well as to deter corruption and control crime and violence.

Since this is a global phenomenon that affects all the world's nations, whether they be rich or poor, industrialized or developing, there is no more appropriate forum than this special session of the General Assembly to initiate the search for a collective international response to what can be described as the most tragic epidemic of our time.

The President returned to the Chair.

To reiterate the irrevocable commitment of the Dominican Republic to cooperate in the struggle against the universal scourge of drugs, I come once again to this forum in which all the world's nations are represented, and I wish to recognize in particular the honourable President of Mexico, Ernesto Zedillo, for his wise initiative of convening this gathering.

In our humble understanding, the root of the drugs problem lies in the fact that it functions like a market, in accordance with the law of supply and demand. The demand is what creates the market, and it is that market that creates an illegal, but highly profitable and attractive trade. Since the drug business operates in accordance with the law of supply and demand, this ends up being the only law that drug traffickers do not violate. In order to successfully confront the world's drug epidemic with the necessary international cooperation, we must emphasize equally the reduction of demand and the control of the supply.

The Dominican Republic is not and has not been either a cultivator nor a producer of narcotic drugs, and our consumption level does not exceed 2 per cent of our population. From this standpoint, the situation of the Dominican Republic seems blessed, because we do not have an actual market where supply and demand converge. However, this is but an illusion, because our geographical location in the centre of the Caribbean and the fact that we share the island of Hispaniola with the Republic of Haiti make the Dominican Republic a transit country for drugs coming from the producer countries of South America to the consumption market of the United States.

Insofar as measures undertaken by the United States to control the drug traffic from Mexico — albeit involving drugs that originate in large part in South America — have been successful, the drug traffickers have modified their routes. Thus, one of the preferred new routes for international drug-trafficking has been through the Caribbean region. According to information provided by the intelligence community, at present, 33 per cent of the drug traffic aimed at the United States passes through the Caribbean — 15 per cent of it through the island of Hispaniola. According to the reports, drugs are introduced mainly through Haiti, then transported by road to Dominican territory and then taken to Puerto Rico.

The drugs currently being consumed in the Dominican Republic are what remains in our national territory for various reasons. Thus our consumption is tending to increase, due to both internal and external factors. The internal factors include the expansion of the economy, the increase in the purchasing capacity of certain social sectors and the influence of cultural elements. As regards external factors, we have to take into account that the United States has been implementing measures aimed at reducing consumption, and if these measures achieve their objectives, then, in accordance with the laws of every economic activity, the drug-trafficking network will go in search of new markets.

Thus, contradictorily enough, the United States' success in reducing its internal consumption means that the Dominican Republic is becoming more vulnerable to drug use, as new or alternative markets are sought in an effort to preserve the large profits derived from illegal drug-trafficking.

For the Dominican Republic, of course, this would be an enormous tragedy with devastating consequences. We sincerely believe that this cannot and must not be the future of our country. We know that to prevent it, we must fight. We must fight indefatigably, with all resources available to us, until we overcome the danger. We must fight together with the international community, because we believe that in this area, no country working unilaterally can possibly succeed.

In response to this threat, we are developing a comprehensive programme that includes extensive prevention work, in which are involved the National Council on Drugs; the Secretary of State for Public Health and Social Welfare; the Secretary of Sports, Physical Education and Recreation; and the National Bureau of Drug Control.

We are also taking steps to prevent our financial institutions from being used to launder dollars, and we have extradited — and intend to continued extraditing — known criminals.

We have been collaborating actively with authorities of other countries and with international organizations in various aspects of this fight, particularly in the area of exchange of information and joint training operations.

The changes made in our judicial branch ensure that our country is moving in the right direction in combating this modern scourge, as was recently recognized by representatives of international bodies.

Because of the vulnerability of our border with Haiti, our armed forces and the National Bureau of Drug Control have taken measures to increase the level of surveillance in that area. For instance, we have reinforced the military troops and anti-drug agents along the Dominican-Haitian border, and provided specialized training for military personnel responsible for detecting and identifying narcotics. We also plan to acquire advanced technological equipment to facilitate the work of the Dominican authorities in the border area.

We are also coordinating with the Haitian authorities in order jointly to tackle this problem. In fact, in a few days I will be meeting with the President of Haiti to analyse, *inter alia*, this serious problem that afflicts our two nations.

During its 10 years of existence, the National Bureau of Drug Control has confiscated 19,713.6 kilogrammes of cocaine. Last year — 1997 — a total of 1,224.9 kilogrammes was confiscated, and from January to May of this year 1,221.5 kilogrammes were

confiscated, which almost equals the amount confiscated last year.

We all know that the United Nations was conceived and created with the fundamental objective of guaranteeing world peace. Inspired by such noble principles, the Dominican Republic became a founding Member of the United Nations system. But today I have come here on behalf of the Government and the people of the Dominican Republic to declare war — a war that will be waged relentlessly and without mercy, and a war that we will win, against one of the greatest perils ever to threaten the human race: the scourge of drugs.

The President: I thank the President of the Dominican Republic.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Jules Albert Wijdenbosch, President of the Republic of Suriname.

President Wijdenbosch (Suriname): Allow me first of all to express my deep appreciation to the Secretary-General and also to the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) for convening this special session of the General Assembly.

The Caribbean region, which has no drug history, is affected by the negative consequences of drug-related crime. Countries in this region — including my country — which can be qualified as small developing countries are systematically included by international drug criminals in their operational network for the trans-shipment and distribution of drugs to the rest of the world.

On the basis of its responsibility, my country has therefore committed itself to every United Nations Convention and programme against drugs. This has been expressed in the integral adjustment of the national legislation.

Suriname has developed an anti-drug strategy plan for the next five years to address the drug problem in a structural manner, while a Monitoring Commission against Drug Abuse and a National Anti-Drug Council have been established. In concert with the private sector, drug-awareness activities are carried on to enhance drug awareness and resistance against drugs and drug abuse among the youth.

Also in the field of international, regional and bilateral cooperation, Suriname has developed special forms of cooperation with, among others, the United States of America, Brazil, Venezuela, Guyana and organizations such as the Inter-American Commission for the Control of Drug Abuse (CICAD), the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force and INTERPOL, which cooperation is now in a phase of being deepened and enhanced.

In this respect I should like to mention that the Governments of Suriname and of the United States are engaged in consultations for the establishment of a bilateral maritime law- enforcement agreement.

From the moment they were drawn up, Suriname became party to the various anti-drug conventions in the world and the anti-drug programmes in the region, including the UNDCP Plan of Action for Drug Control Coordination and Cooperation in the Caribbean (Barbados Plan of Action) and the Hemispheric Anti-Drug Strategy Plan of the Organization of American States (OAS) and CICAD. In this framework we now contribute to the establishment of the Multi-Regional Evaluation Mechanism for the American region.

Furthermore, my country will hold a subregional drug conference in the second half of this year, at which Suriname, Brazil, Venezuela, Guyana and French Guyana as well as regional anti-drug organizations will participate in designing legal and institutional mechanisms and strategies to do battle against the trans-shipment of drugs and drug-related crime in this region.

Indeed, my Government feels especially strengthened and encouraged by the conclusions and positive recommendations contained in the evaluation report of 4 June of the United Nations International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), which was drafted following the INCB's recent visit to Suriname in connection with the measures taken within the framework of the implementation of various United Nations conventions.

Unfortunately, we have to note that, despite the many conventions, anti-drug programmes and measures effected to date, the picture of the world drug problem has not improved sufficiently. On the contrary, we are facing new challenges raised by the drug problem; new varieties and synthetic kinds of drugs; new techniques and tactics as regards routes for the shipping of drugs; new drug syndicates; and new patterns in the users' culture. In respect of drug-trafficking, we also see a

shift in and replacement of traditional production areas, consumer markets and transit systems.

We can only ask: What did the international community fail or omit to do so as to call a halt to this drug problem that is destroying our world? It is distressing to observe that, despite the employment of the many billions of dollars which were put up by the international community, the current investment strategy has not yielded the desired results.

We cannot provide a ready answer or explanation. However, I would like to share some thoughts about the impediments to an effective combating of the drug problem across the world.

First, international and regional anti-drug conventions and programmes are not implemented concurrently, because of which a coordinated and collective approach is lacking.

Secondly, these conventions and programmes are comprehensive and integral; however, in their implementation there are differences as to the areas to be accorded special attention and priority.

Thirdly, the desirable alliance between States and regions in the fight against drugs is often abandoned and a distinction is even made between drug-producing, drug-consuming and drug-transit countries, which causes tensions in the cooperation and coordination among States and regions.

Fourthly, the domination of political aspects in the cooperation or assistance between States and international organizations in the field of drug control, coupled to preconditions, is at times out of proportion and causes delay in effective, swift and purposeful drug control.

Fifthly and finally, we have noticed the paradoxical effect of the fact that, while we are required to take effective, integral and radical measures to tackle the drug problem, globalization, regionalism and the creation of common market economies throughout the world demand ever greater liberalization in the field of border control and the free movement of persons and goods and call for a desirable deregulation in this respect.

Suriname is pleased to give its approval to the political declaration and plans of action for international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drugs that include the guiding principles of drug demand reduction. This is the first agreement in the history of the United Nations in which the issue of demand reduction is deemed of vital importance for the integrated approach to and fight against drug-related crime.

The United Nations and its institutions will have to ensure that the battle against drugs is waged in accordance with the starting points and objectives and in the spirit of our Organization of nations, and in such a manner that, within this concept of drug control, no opportunity or room will be created for any country or for any organization whatsoever to couple drug control to improper political mechanisms. The deployment of drug control as a political mechanism, in whatever form, by countries against other countries, will have grave, adverse consequences for effective and reliable international, regional and bilateral cooperation.

Therefore, I urge the nations to work out, in accordance with the guidelines and programmes of the United Nations and its institutions, effective and comprehensive agreements for cooperation at the regional, multilateral and bilateral levels to address the drug problem in a structured, integrated and effective manner in order to guarantee a drug-free world for our societies, for our young people and for the next generation.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Suriname for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

President Cardoso (*spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation*): Brazil will not remain passive in the face of the world drug problem as the insidious enemy, narcotic drugs, threatens our families, our youth and our societies.

The world drug problem is one that must be approached with clarity and honesty. Clarity is essential to a full grasp of the factors at play. Honesty is an imperative if we are to overcome hesitations and take the necessary decisions to defeat this scourge.

We live in a world that is growing smaller. Distances and geographical factors no longer represent obstacles to the free circulation of individuals, goods or ideas. This situation should be looked at as a positive

development in terms of its favourable impact on growth and prosperity.

It is essential, however, that the increasingly permeable nature of international borders not become an incentive for the dissemination of criminal activity or for tolerance of impunity. People, goods, services, technology and information — not crime or narcotic drugs — should be allowed to circulate freely.

With the opening for signature in Vienna of the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, we reached a higher level in international cooperation in this field. This old problem is now being tackled from a fresh perspective. Few countries, however, have been spared unpleasant surprises as regards the increasing scope and intensity of the impact of the illicit drug traffic and related crimes on their population.

Through experience, we have come to the conclusion that it is necessary to deal with this question in a comprehensive manner. Limiting government initiative to the realm of repressive measures has proven inadequate. It is now clear that prevention campaigns, along with efforts to rehabilitate drug addicts and fight related crimes, are equally fundamental.

Drugs undermine the very dignity and freedom of human beings, their most precious attributes. If we are to redouble our efforts in prevention and be relentless in combatting crime, we must also give priority to the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts, the victims of this most vicious social disease of our times.

Prevention cannot be promoted through the dissemination of fear alone, but should aim at presenting alternative paths capable of generating self-assurance among the young as they confront an often difficult reality.

The war against narcotic drugs will be won only if it is waged on several fronts simultaneously. Success will depend, above all else, on our capacity to safeguard a drug-free environment for our children.

We know today that international cooperation is vital in the fight against transborder crimes. In many ways, all our countries are affected by the various dimensions of the drug problem: production, traffic, trade and consumption.

We have succeeded in developing a common language based on the concept of shared responsibility. The international community can thus enhance the cohesiveness of its strategies. I am here to assure the Assembly that Brazil will continue to honour its responsibilities in this joint undertaking.

We have been an active participant in regional and multilateral initiatives dealing with the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs. We have concluded bilateral agreements with all countries in South America and are establishing partnerships with several other nations as well. The intensive cooperation carried out with our associates in the Common Market of the Southern Cone is of paramount importance.

Internally, the fight against drugs has brought together all the political forces in the nation, to the benefit of the ongoing process of updating legislation to combat organized crime. Legislation has recently been approved on money-laundering, chemical precursors control, the protection of the national airspace through a "shoot-down" policy, the possession and registration of small arms, the obtention of additional financial resources to re-equip the police, increased aerial surveillance for the Amazon and the fight against organized crime in general. In addition, we are devoting more resources to the rehabilitation of addicts and prevention campaigns.

We are fully aware that much remains to be done, but important steps have been taken. We are sending a clear message to our youth: addiction to drugs amounts to slavery, self-destruction and death. Attempts to suggest the contrary by depicting drugs as glamorous are dangerous and misleading. Such attempts are nothing but lies. We are also sending a clear message to those who profit from the perverse trade in drugs: they will not find the slightest tolerance in Brazil for their illicit activity.

It is in this context that I hereby announce the creation of a National Anti-Drug Secretariat in Brazil, whose mission will be to define a national policy regarding drug-related problems so as to promote the coordination of all governmental activity directed at prevention, repression and rehabilitation.

What we expect from this special session is a consensus pointing to solutions that will assist our countries in their common struggle. We are convinced that it is at the multilateral level, rather than through isolated or unilateral action, that we will find the answers capable of orienting our international cooperation in this area. The vision we are forging here and now gives rise to renewed hopes. This is an occasion full of promise

which represents an encounter with the destiny we wish to build for our societies. Posterity will not spare its judgement on our generation if we do not rise to this challenge.

The President: I thank the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency The Honourable Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister and Minister for National Security, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Planning and Information of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Mr. Douglas (Saint Kitts and Nevis): This important twentieth special session is not only most opportune, but also extremely critical. I sincerely hope, therefore, that at the end of this special session we will have been able to find common ground and are able to leave with the satisfaction of having made some tangible progress, having grown more determined to work together in the fight against the pervasive evil of narco-trafficking. It is incumbent upon us to use this important forum to send a potent and unambiguous signal to anyone involved in this illicit trade that their time is running out. We are watching them closely, and we intend to fight them forcefully and decisively.

I say to all present here that this scourge imposes a very daunting challenge on small island developing countries such as my own country, Saint Kitts and Nevis, however, will never relent. We will continue to wage a vigorous and strategic campaign against the illegal drug trade despite our small size and limited resources that make interdiction difficult.

It is only through a coincidence of geography that we find ourselves placed squarely within the unfriendly theatre between supply and demand. Otherwise, this high-stakes game would have just as easily bypassed us; bypassed the usually tranquil and pristine shores of our twin-island Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

May I insist that we are ploughing the winds unless we commit to partnership and to developing practical strategies that attack the drug trade at its epicentre. The illicit drug trade is demand driven. All our efforts will have been in vain if the market for illegal drugs is not eliminated. How can we truly expect small, poor countries such as mine to defeat the wealthy drug lords if the rich countries, with their wealth of resources, are unsuccessful in limiting the demand?

The obvious challenges notwithstanding, in the last two and a half years my Government has taken bold, imaginative and prompt steps to deal with this grave problem. In Saint Kitts and Nevis, where we have a shortage of material resources, we have succeeded in tapping a copious reservoir of determination and commitment in the war against illegal drugs.

In the face of tremendous criticism from several quarters, my Government reconstituted our National Defence Force, whose primary role is to enhance and strengthen the crime-fighting capability of our police. We shall not compromise the integrity of our resolve to protect and defend the heritage of our children. Neither will we allow the corrosive tentacles of narco-trafficking to undermine the socio-economic progress we have made as a people.

Additionally, my Government has enacted new laws and amended existing laws to deal more effectively and swiftly with those persons found guilty of engaging in activities that sacrifice the lives and the progress of our people merely to line their own pockets. Further, let me assure all that Saint Kitts and Nevis has been working assiduously and will continue to work even more decisively and closely with the international community to ensure that persons found guilty of drug crimes under due process of law are punished to the fullest extent of the laws of our land.

We all have to work together to make it extremely uncomfortable for drug traffickers: they should not become comfortable nor be allowed to enjoy life through ill-gotten means; they should not find a safe haven anywhere in the world. These, are the messages that we must send, and we must speak in one voice, loudly.

The reality of this meeting is a positive step in the right direction. Drug-trafficking is a transnational crime with annual revenues that baffle the imagination. With such resources, the traffickers can afford to devise sophisticated means to legitimize their work and surround themselves with the appropriate mechanisms to protect them from external judicial penetration. The use of illicit trade has become so pervasive and advanced that they reach into the delicate cores of our societies and eat away at the very fabric of our communities.

On this score, we share a common experience: we have a common enemy. Although I welcome conferences of this nature, our nationals demand action and our situation requires cooperation. We cannot afford to

quibble on methodology where immediate results are necessary. We will not eradicate the drug trade by pointing fingers or passing judgement on national Governments.

Any country alienated is a resource partner lost. Political indignation and national pontificating will not facilitate what we all want, which is a decisive victory in the war on drugs. We have work to do, and we must do it together as a matter of priority because we all have a stake in the fight against this sinister affair, drug-trafficking.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. José María Aznar, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain.

President Aznar *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Ten years after the signing of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, we know some things for sure: there is nowhere in the world free from the scourge of drugs, and we want our children to have a life that is free of this horrible problem.

But above all, we know that a meeting of Heads of State and Government such as this one cannot be a display of powerlessness. We must be much bolder and much more creative than the drug traffickers. We must have the determination and conviction to vanquish them in our homes, in our streets and in our schools, to banish them from society and to make life so difficult for them that they abandon once and for all their criminal activities.

This firmness against the criminals must be accompanied by our solidarity with and our help for those who suffer from the various physical and mental ills of drugs, particularly those who suffer from AIDS. We will spare no effort to make them feel that we are with them in the process of social rehabilitation and the recovery of their self-esteem and physical well-being.

We also have to show solidarity with those who are victims of violence and drug-related crime and with those who find this trade intolerable for political, moral and family reasons because it threatens democracy, encourages corruption and strikes at free and harmonious coexistence.

I am therefore pleased to be here today as we continue to struggle together against this threat to the dignity of the human being. It touches all sectors of society, but particularly young people and their ability to take a leading role in the future. It is a threat that costs the countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development $120 billion annually in health, police and judicial expenditures.

Baldwin said that not everything we face can be changed, but nothing can be changed until we face it. We therefore believe that international cooperation is the main means of combating illicit narcotics trafficking. In recent years, the international community has adopted certain basic principles: respect for the territorial jurisdiction of States, shared responsibility and a comprehensive approach in accordance with law. These are the three elements that must guide us towards our common objective of a drug-free society.

The United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) must keep its leading role, thus avoiding unilateral actions. Spain, as a member of the group of major donors, will soon be increasing again its voluntary contribution for financing cooperation projects, particularly in the area of demand reduction.

We have always maintained that international policy in the fight against drugs must be based on the following three criteria.

First, we need global and comprehensive plans; it is not possible to find solutions working only on supply or only on demand. We also have to deal with money-laundering, consumption prevention, assistance to drug addicts, social rehabilitation, illicit trafficking in precursors and the promotion of alternative development.

Secondly, we need to empower State cooperation through flexible policies so that we can react quickly to shifting trends in organized crime. Any anti-drug policy that takes a purely national perspective is doomed to fail.

Thirdly, effective action is possible only if it is accompanied by full respect for international law and with norms that are coordinated with national legal systems.

We know that we must redouble our efforts at the national level, within the European Union and within the United Nations. The Spanish national anti-drug plan seeks to apply this global and comprehensive approach.

We have fostered coordination between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean in a dialogue that rejects unilateralism and supports alternative development and shared responsibility. We are successfully carrying out crop substitution plans in countries of Latin America and the Maghreb so that their people can have a future with new opportunities, and we are also thereby combating poverty and social marginalization.

Their struggle to emerge from underdevelopment is our struggle. Our fight against drugs must also be theirs.

In this framework of cooperation, a Latin American network of non-governmental organizations specializing in drug dependency was established on 3 April 1998, at Spain's urging.

From the standpoint of prevention, we have developed policies in three priority areas: schools, family and the media. We have also extended the assistance network to include specific programmes for minors and the prison population, and are taking resolute action in those neighbourhoods at greatest risk.

We have also adopted measures such as the establishment of a fund to hold the confiscated profits of drug-trafficking, a register of chemical substances and precursors and a more accurate and effective system to combat money-laundering.

Global response and multilateral cooperation are the touchstones for our action — hence the importance of this special session as a political message of our desire for change. The Government of Spain has supported it from the outset, by committing itself to implement the agreements that we reach here and as soon as possible.

We endorse the Political Declaration with interest and expectation and consider the documents prepared on issues including synthetic drugs, the prohibition of precursors, money-laundering, alternative development and judicial cooperation to be very valuable. Among these, particular attention should be given to the production, traffic in and consumption of synthetic drugs, because we believe that this is one of the priority areas for action in the near future.

Because of its geographical situation, Spain is a drug-transit country, and drugs are consumed by and ravage some of our young people. I believe it to be a priority task for my Government to support families that struggle daily with this problem to the best of their abilities. That is why our message can only be one of unity: this is a shared task for civil society, social workers and all of those who are fighting on the front line against suffering and helplessness. This responsibility is shared by other peoples and Governments facing the same problems, and this work must include the establishment of new and better opportunities in employment, education and housing. We must achieve results as soon as possible for our citizens.

We have a realistic awareness of what a great deal remains to be done, and we must follow the road upon which we have embarked for the benefit of young people and families and of our societies and our democracies. We must foster a life free from threats, and we must resolutely make war on organized crime, marginalization and the diseases that result from drug consumption.

For future generations we must make this a problem of the past, a problem that was overcome because of our work and our resolve.

As Miguel de Cervantes said, a good start is half the journey. Four centuries later this is still true. And we are resolutely determined to get all the way to the end.

The President: I thank the President of the Government of Spain for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Luo Gan, State Counsellor and Chairman of the delegation of China.

Mr. Luo Gan (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): Today, on the eve of the twenty-first century, leaders from various countries throughout the world have convened this special session to define new strategies and measures on international cooperation for drug control. This is of great significance for eradicating the ever rampant evil of drugs and protecting the health of humankind and the well-being of posterity.

As is well known, throughout its history China has undergone incalculable suffering because of drugs. After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Chinese Government adopted resolute measures and completely solved the problem of drugs, thereby creating a miracle acknowledged throughout the world.

However, 30 years later the evil of drugs, which had been eradicated from China, again found its way into the country because of the surge in worldwide drug abuse

and China's proximity to the area of the Golden Triangle, the world's largest source of heroin. Illicit drugs have been infiltrating China from abroad incessantly, and China has been being used as a transit route. We attach great importance to and are very concerned about the return of drugs to China and have taken a series of firm counter-measures. The National People's Congress has enacted anti-drug laws. The Chinese Government has established a drug control coordinating agency at the national level. We have developed an anti-drug strategy that includes a strengthened ban on the illicit use, cultivation and traffic of drugs, measures to block illicit drug sources and supplies and strict enforcement of drug-control and related laws and emphasis on striking at the root causes of the drug issue. The Chinese Government has followed the principle of attaching equal importance to the reduction of both drug demand and supply.

We have also comprehensively implemented the United Nations Global Action Plan and have invested considerable human and financial resources in this regard. On the one hand, we have continued to step up law enforcement measures to suppress drug- trafficking, cracked down severely on cross-border drug-trafficking activities and resolutely prohibited the illicit cultivation of poppies. On the other hand, we have intensified our efforts to increase the general public's awareness of drug prevention and have conducted comprehensive activities aimed at reducing drug demand.

Remarkable results have been achieved nationwide in fighting drugs. From 1991 to 1997 Chinese law enforcement bodies seized a total of 26 tons of heroin trafficked from the Golden Triangle area, effectively diminishing the supply in the international drug market.

China was the first country to ban amphetamine-type stimulants. Soon after the founding of the People's Republic, the Chinese Government issued a formal decree banning the production and use of methamphetamine. In the past, China has always strictly prohibited the import, production and use of all amphetamine-type psychotropic substances. In addition, we firmly cracked down on the illegal processing and smuggling of methamphetamine, a criminal activity that was rampant in the early 1990s, and notable results were achieved.

As one of the first countries in the world to exercise control over precursor chemicals, China has been implementing, since 1993, the export licence system covering the 22 United Nations-listed controlled chemicals and, since 1996, the import licence system. From 1991 to 1997 Chinese law enforcement bodies seized a total of 923 tons of precursor chemicals being smuggled to the Golden Triangle area.

The Chinese Government has always attached importance to international drug control cooperation, supported joint efforts by all countries in the world to tackle the drug issue and supported and taken an active part in the international fight against drugs. Not only is China a party to the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, but it was one of the first signatories to the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. China has actively participated in the subregional drug control cooperation programme initiated by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and has helped develop substitute crops in the traditional opium-planting areas in the northern parts of Myanmar and Laos through technical assistance, agricultural aid, tourist resource development and other methods, which have not only greatly boosted social and economic development in the border areas of China's neighbouring countries but also effectively reduced the dependence of these areas on the drug economy.

The ultimate goal of the Chinese Government is to completely eradicate illicit drugs. The Chinese President, Mr. Jiang Zemin, wrote an epigraph for China's anti-narcotics campaign on 20 May 1998; it reads, "Eradicate all illicit drugs in the interest of both present and future generations". That epigraph fully expresses the strong determination of the Chinese leaders and Government to resolve the drug issue and its unequivocal position on this. The Chinese Government will, as always, pay attention to and strengthen drug enforcement. We will not stop fighting illicit drugs until they are completely eradicated.

For a long time, the international community and the Governments of many countries have made unremitting efforts in drug control, which have resulted in encouraging achievements. However, at present, the illicit cultivation, production and consumption of drugs are still on the rise throughout the world, and international drug-trafficking activities are becoming increasingly rampant. All this has caused serious damage to society.

In this connection, the Chinese Government believes that it is imperative to adhere to the principle of extensive participation and shared responsibility. The drug

consumer countries, producer countries and transit countries should each take up their respective responsibilities in earnest, closely cooperate with one another and establish a new kind of cooperative relationship in drug control. As a participant in international drug-control cooperation, each and every Government bears crucial responsibilities in drug control. In the meantime, the sovereignty of each nation should be fully respected in international drug-control cooperation, and no country or organization should seek to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries using the drug issue or drug control as an excuse.

It is imperative also to implement an integrated and balanced international drug-control strategy in an all-round way. The role of existing international drug-control mechanisms should be strengthened, the prohibition on illicit use, cultivation and traffic of drugs should be fully enforced, and practical efforts should be made to reduce the illicit demand for drugs while severely cracking down on the illicit supply of drugs.

Another imperative is to pay attention to alternative development. Alternative development is an important link in the integrated international drug-control strategy. The key to a fundamental solution to the drug issue lies in a secure livelihood for the inhabitants of drug-plant growing areas and the economic development of drug-plant growing countries. The international community should provide the countries concerned with financial and technical assistance necessary for their crop substitution programmes.

This session provides an opportunity to further strengthen international cooperation in the fight against illicit drugs. The Chinese Government is ready to continuously maintain and develop its friendly cooperation with the United Nations and with other countries in the field of drug control and to make fresh contributions to eradicating the evil of drugs and safeguarding the survival and development of mankind.

The President: I thank the State Counsellor and Chairman of the Delegation of the People's Republic of China for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency The Right Honourable John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Prescott (United Kingdom): I am honoured to be speaking today on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia — align themselves with this statement, as does the associated country of Cyprus.

We are all quite clear about what we are here for. Drugs can wreck lives and communities. This is a plain fact we cannot ignore, and every previous speaker has spoken of it. I personally will never forget the moment when I sat with a constituent of mine, a mother torn apart by the despair of watching her daughter slide into the downward spiral of drug misuse. I will never forget young constituents, addicts, trapped into a life of crime and wrecked futures.

Countering drugs is a priority for the United Kingdom Government. We will only succeed if we work in partnership. That is why this special session is so important. It is our chance to show the world that there is a real spirit within the United Nations to counter illegal drugs. It is why the European Union continues to support both the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the strength and commitment of its new Executive Director. A global approach involves each and every one of us: all Governments; all areas; all regions. It is no use stopping opium cultivation in one place just to see opium grow elsewhere. We gain nothing by closing one trafficking route to see another opened.

We need to be committed to stifling the availability of drugs on the streets — and to stifling the damage that drugs cause. And we need to reduce the demand for illegal drugs. We need to take action through education, through prevention, through treatment and through rehabilitation.

The United Kingdom Presidency of the European Union has urged all States to ratify the three major United Nations drugs Conventions and to implement their obligations under them. The European Union provides a large share of the funding for the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, and the European Union urges every Government represented here to do all it can to give its crucial programmes not just moral support but financial backing, so that the UNDCP can achieve its full potential. We also urge other international bodies, individual Governments and non-governmental organizations to look at how they can give greater priority to drugs within their own individual programmes.

The guiding principles on demand reduction, which we are talking about today and which we will hope to adopt at this special session, represent a remarkable step forward for the United Nations. Of course, there is no single blueprint which will work everywhere, and no one has a monopoly on wisdom. That is why we welcome the panels taking place over the next few days; they provide an excellent forum for us to share experiences and learn lessons from each other. The guiding principles recognize the continuing value of sharing information and experiences across national boundaries to look at what works and what does not, so that local communities can decide the best way forward for themselves.

But it is no good hoping to eliminate the demand for drugs without tackling the supply. This special session has to adopt proposals to help us tackle money-laundering and improve judicial cooperation. On money-laundering, the European Union endorses the 40 recommendations made by the Financial Action Task Force, and we would like them accepted as a global standard. The special session will also set out guidelines for alternative development to provide different livelihoods for some of the poorest people in the world, who are most often linked with illegal drug cultivation. We will tackle the growing menace from synthetic drugs such as Ecstasy and from the illicit trade in drug precursors.

We must also recognize that the drug scene is constantly changing, with new trafficking routes and new trends in abuse. So strategies at every level, from local to international, need to provide a flexible and effective response to the problem. For example, in the United Kingdom, as throughout the European Union, we have learnt that tackling drugs successfully means looking at the whole range of social problems, covering housing, unemployment, poverty, crime and family life: a holistic approach to the problem.

Achieving success is not just about eradicating crime; it is also about giving people a fresh chance. To coin a phrase, we need to be tough on drugs crime and tough on the causes of drugs crime, and that is why the United Kingdom Government has appointed the first-ever United Kingdom Anti-drugs Coordinator. That is why we have recently published a new 10-year strategy for tackling drug misuse. And that is why we are spending considerable amounts of money in dealing with these problems. We need to show every producer, every financier, every trafficker, every pusher, every user and every potential user that we mean business. Partnership is essential for that.

We want the public and private sectors and the non-governmental organizations to work together on education, treatment and prevention programmes. We want our police, customs and intelligence agencies to work together to spearhead the fight against the drugs barons.

At the European Union level, a new European-wide intelligence network known as Europol will shortly come into being. This will ensure that we can share intelligence and information across the European Union and with others quickly and effectively to hamper trafficking in drugs and money-laundering. The Lisbon Observatory, a European monitoring group, is in place to ensure that we have the widest possible information on how drugs affect each European Union member State. We are working to combat new synthetic drugs with an early warning system to ensure the rapid exchange of information as soon as a new drug hits the streets anywhere in the 15 member States.

The European Union is working in partnership with other countries. We are working to ensure the success of major programmes in the Caribbean and Central Asia, and we have established a new coordination and cooperation mechanism with the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, including an action plan jointly devised by Europe and Latin American countries. We are working very closely with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, with countries in southern Africa and with the Association of South-East Asian Nations.

Next week the European Union Heads of Government will endorse the key elements of a new European Union drug strategy for the years 2000-2004. They will highlight the importance of effective practical cooperation between enforcement agencies, judicial authorities and others, and they will emphasize the need for greater efforts to reduce the demand for drugs.

These key elements fit hand in glove with the global themes that we are endorsing at this special session. We are here at the United Nations to find a way forward, by pooling our resources and working together with a common aim: to make a real impact on the world drug problem.

Of course it will take time. But it is vital that we, as political leaders, commit ourselves to doing all we can to find a solution, so that our children and their children need not face a life damaged by drugs.

In isolation we can do little. Together, we have the strength to meet this challenge.

The President: I thank the Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for his statement.

In view of the fact that most speakers so far have spoken for more than seven minutes, I would like to recall again the seven-minute time limit that was adopted at the beginning of this session. I would be very grateful to the speakers inscribed on the list if they would observe the time limit imposed by the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.